

**To:** Stalcup, Dana[Stalcup.Dana@epa.gov]  
**Cc:** Gartner, Lois[Gartner.Lois@epa.gov]; Deitz, Randy[Deitz.Randy@epa.gov]; Dreyfus, Melissa G.[Dreyfus.Melissa@epa.gov]; Wells, Suzanne[Wells.Suzanne@epa.gov]  
**From:** Fitz-James, Schatzi  
**Sent:** Tue 10/27/2015 2:38:20 PM  
**Subject:** Re: AP Followup Questions

Just talked to Suzanne and shahid who will start in them after a very abbreviated staff meeting

Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 27, 2015, at 10:36 AM, Stalcup, Dana <[Stalcup.Dana@epa.gov](mailto:Stalcup.Dana@epa.gov)> wrote:

You folks see this?

Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 27, 2015, at 10:27 AM, Cohen, Nancy <[Cohen.Nancy@epa.gov](mailto:Cohen.Nancy@epa.gov)> wrote:

Dana: OPA wants to put Mathy on the phone with this AP reporter around 1pm today. Can your shop take the regional responses that address the following 3 questions and boil 'em down to clear, concise, easy to understand responses that tell the story for Mathy's use during an interview or that we can use if we have to do written responses? Please advise asap.

1. Further details on the decision not to use a drill rig to check water conditions inside Gold King. Specifically, please provide any cost estimate(s) of using a drill rig at the site, an explanation of how timing was a factor, details of what safety and technical issues were at play.
2. Regarding the Bureau of Reclamation's Technical Evaluation of the Gold King spill, pages 44 and 45 include mention of communications between the EPA OSC and BOR's Mike Gobla. The OSC apparently told Mr. Gobla he was "unsure about the plans for the Gold King Mine" and requested an outside review of the EPA?DRMS plans. Prior to a planned meeting with Mr. Gobla on Aug. 14, according to the report, work at the mine began. The report also mentions the EPA OSC going on vacation. What was the OSC unsure about? Why did the work begin prior to the planned meeting with BOR? How the OSC's upcoming vacation factor in to all this?
3. Attachment to this message is an email chain that discusses purchase of a piezometer, presumably for testing water pressure. Was this intended for use at Gold King mine? Was it obtained? Was it used? If so, what were the results? Would it be used in conjunction with drilling a bore hole or is that not necessary?

Thanks, nancy

Nancy Cohen

U.S. EPA OSWER

202.566.0171

**From:** Cohen, Nancy  
**Sent:** Friday, October 23, 2015 2:31 PM  
**To:** Stalcup, Dana <[Stalcup.Dana@epa.gov](mailto:Stalcup.Dana@epa.gov)>  
**Cc:** Lois Gartner <[Gartner.Lois@epa.gov](mailto:Gartner.Lois@epa.gov)>; Fitz-James, Schatzi <[Fitz-James.Schatzi@epa.gov](mailto:Fitz-James.Schatzi@epa.gov)>; Randy Deitz <[Deitz.Randy@epa.gov](mailto:Deitz.Randy@epa.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: AP Followup Questions

Dana: please see OPAs email below and note we need to provide a response to the following question from Matt Brown of AP –

3. Attachment to this message is an email chain that discusses purchase of a piezometer, presumably for testing water pressure. Was this intended for use at Gold King mine? Was it obtained? Was it used? If so, what were the results? Would it be used in conjunction with drilling a bore hole or is that not necessary?

Thanks, nancy

Nancy Cohen

U.S. EPA OSWER

202.566.0171

**From:** Grantham, Nancy  
**Sent:** Friday, October 23, 2015 2:22 PM

**To:** Cohen, Nancy <[Cohen.Nancy@epa.gov](mailto:Cohen.Nancy@epa.gov)>; Hestmark, Martin <[Hestmark.Martin@epa.gov](mailto:Hestmark.Martin@epa.gov)>; Smith, Paula <[Smith.Paula@epa.gov](mailto:Smith.Paula@epa.gov)>; StClair, Christie <[StClair.Christie@epa.gov](mailto:StClair.Christie@epa.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: AP Followup Questions

Hi all –

The first 2 questions are likely answered by the q and a being revised now by Region 8 and OSWER –

We need to work on a response to question 3.

Thanks ng

**From:** Brown, Matthew [<mailto:MBrown@ap.org>]  
**Sent:** Friday, October 23, 2015 1:24 PM  
**To:** StClair, Christie <[StClair.Christie@epa.gov](mailto:StClair.Christie@epa.gov)>  
**Cc:** Grantham, Nancy <[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov](mailto:Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov)>; Elliott, Dan <[delliott@ap.org](mailto:delliott@ap.org)>  
**Subject:**

Hi Christie-

As discussed, looking for more information on following items:

1. Further details on the decision not to use a drill rig to check water conditions inside Gold King. Specifically, please provide any cost estimate(s) of using a drill rig at the site, an explanation of how timing was a factor, details of what safety and technical issues were at play.
2. Regarding the Bureau of Reclamation's Technical Evaluation of the Gold King spill, pages 44 and 45 include mention of communications between the EPA OSC and BOR's Mike Gobla. The OSC apparently told Mr. Gobla he was "unsure about the plans for the Gold King Mine" and requested an outside review of the EPA?DRMS plans. Prior to a planned meeting with Mr. Gobla on Aug. 14, according to the report, work at the mine began. The report also mentions the EPA OSC going on vacation.

What was the OSC unsure about? Why did the work begin prior to the planned meeting with BOR? How the OSC's upcoming vacation factor in to all this?

3. Attachment to this message is an email chain that discusses purchase of a piezometer, presumably for testing water pressure. Was this intended for use at Gold King mine? Was it obtained? Was it used? If so, what were the results? Would it be used in conjunction with drilling a bore hole or is that not necessary?

Thanks as always for the help.

Matt Brown

**Matthew Brown**

Associated Press Correspondent

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mobile-406 696 4213

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**From:** StClair, Christie [<mailto:StClair.Christie@epa.gov>]

**Sent:** Thursday, October 22, 2015 6:59 PM

**To:** Brown, Matthew; Elliott, Dan

**Cc:** Grantham, Nancy

**Subject:** Making sure you have this

Matt and Dan, just making sure you had the additional statement from Nancy on the drill rig. As you know, our internal report has greater detail on how the site conditions affected this decision.

Please attribute to Nancy Grantham:

Regarding the decision by EPA not to use a drill rig to bore into the Gold King Mine

(GKM) from above and directly determine the level of the mine pool, EPA's GKM Internal Review Team found that site conditions made it difficult to undertake such drilling to determine pressure within the mine. The Review Team identified technical challenges, safety, timing, and cost as factors in considering this technique—and also identified the steepness and instability of slopes at the site as a key safety consideration.

Thanks,

Christie

Off the record - We would also call to your attention to pg 69, 3rd paragraph, of the DOI report which concludes that "eventually even if no action had been taken, it may have failed on its own.

**Christie St. Clair**

Office of Public Affairs

Environmental Protection Agency

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